An adult condor named Hoi, distinguished by his pinkish-orange head and neck (above), lived with the six juvenile birds, teaching them skills needed for survival in the wild.

eagles pose a moderate risk to the birds' survival. Much greater is the danger posed by humans. The preeminent threat to condors is lead poisoning, caused by consumption of lead-contaminated carcasses or gut piles left behind by hunters. Few people are aware of the danger lead poses to condors, or of the solutions that could overcome these hazards. These threats can be mitigated through the use of lead-free ammunition or burying animal remains, and a comprehensive educational effort is a focus of all agencies and organizations engaged in the condor recovery program. Collision with utility lines is another danger to condors because they have difficulty seeing them. Small, inexpensive diverters have been used effectively in release areas to make the lines more visible. Despite these and other obstacles, successful recovery of the species is possible. Captive-bred condors fledged a chick this fall in the Grand Canyon, the first wild fledgling of this species in the wild since the mid-1980s, and a milestone in the overall condor recovery effort.

Ultimately, bringing the condors home to western North America will depend on an informed and engaged public committed to their return. The staff at Pinnacles welcomes the opportunity to serve as a critical link in the recovery effort. ■

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Reproduction of Canada lynx discovered in Yellowstone

By Tiffany Potter

Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, has confirmed the presence of a female Canada lynx and her kitten in the central portion of the park. Staff members of the Yellowstone lynx project were jubilant when, with a snowstorm looming, they located snow tracks of a lynx and her cub on an extremely cold day (below –20° F, –29° C) in February 2003. A goal of the lynx project is to determine if Yellowstone has a resident population of this elusive animal, and this discovery suggests that the animals are resident rather than transient.

With more than 50 pounds of survival and tracking gear, biologists on skis followed the tracks for 2.2 miles (3.5 km), measuring tracks, taking plaster casts, and collecting hair and fecal samples for

"This discovery is the first documented case of reproduction of lynx in Wyoming since 1998."

DNA analysis. Scientists at the University of Montana's Rocky Mountain Research Laboratory extracted DNA from the samples and identified the source of the hair and scat as lynx. The Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit has an agreement with the genetics laboratory to identify species and gender of forest carnivores from hair and scat samples submitted by the National Park Service. The presence of Canada lynx was first recorded from DNA from hair snared in summer 2001; however, questions remained as to whether lynx were visitors to or residents of Yellowstone.

This discovery is the first documented case of reproduction of lynx in Wyoming since 1998. In the summer, reproduction was also documented in six lynx females that were reintroduced to southwestern Colorado. These reproducing lynx represent an important success for this species, which is listed as threatened across its range in the contiguous United States. Scientists still have questions about the long-term survival of lynx offspring and their ability to be recruited into the population. Documenting a small population of lynx in Yellowstone could be an impetus for additional study. ■

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